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About labour statistics guide

Guide to labour statistics

Learn more about our different measures, data sources and information available

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Overview

Labour statistics are about people. They measure people's participation in work – their earnings, type of work, working hours and conditions – as well as their success in, or barriers to, finding work.

Labour statistics provide insight into the economy and the effect of policy settings on the population through measures related to labour supply and demand, as well as its price.

Measures and uses

Labour statistics sit at the intersection of economic and social statistics. They provide information about the size and structure of Australia's workforce required for policy formulation, evaluation and macro-economic modelling, and measure relationships between employment, income and other social and economic characteristics.

Four key components related to work and the broader labour market are measured:

- People
- Jobs
- Hours
- Payments

The various data sources and available information related to people, jobs, hours and payments are designed for different purposes, and can have different definitions, timings or features. We encourage you to use a range of measures together to better understand the state of the labour market. For more information, see [Scope of Australian labour statistics \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/overview#scope-of-australian-labour-statistics\)](#) and [Uses and users of labour statistics \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/overview#uses-and-users-of-labour-statistics\)](#) in Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods.

The four pillars of ABS labour statistics

ABS labour statistics are drawn from four key types of data sources, or "pillars" of data, which provide complementary insights into the labour market across a range of topics.

For more information, see [Methods: Four pillars of labour statistics \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics\)](#) in Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods.

The four pillars

Australian Labour Market

Household Surveys

- Employment
- Unemployment rate
- Underemployment
- Mobility and churn
- Joblessness and barriers to work
- Working arrangements
- Job flexibility
- Job security
- Union membership
- Earnings (socio-dem and job characteristics)
- Retirement
- Work-related injuries

Business Surveys

- Headline earnings
- Hourly earnings
- Earnings distributions
- Wage Price Indexes
- Pay-setting methods
- Job vacancies
- Public sector employment
- Industrial disputes

Administrative Data

- Payroll jobs indexes
- Wages indexes
- Jobs by detailed industry
- Regional jobs and employment
- Job relationships
- Jobs throughout the year
- Employment by business size
- Personal/Employee income
- Income inequality

Labour Accounts

- Jobs by industry
- Filled and unfilled jobs
- Hours worked by industry
- Multiple job-holding
- Secondary jobs
- Public/Private sector employment
- Total and average labour income
- Labour costs

Underpinning frameworks and concepts

Statistical releases

Our labour-related statistical releases inform on issues related to work and the labour market. These releases are drawn from a variety of different data sources and are available on the ABS website.

Each release generally includes a high-level overview of findings, spreadsheets containing more detailed data, and a methodology page providing explanatory information on the methods used to produce the release. Some releases also have accompanying TableBuilder and/or microdata products to enable you to produce customised tables or undertake more detailed analysis.

Most releases include a media release covering high level statistical information drawing out the main stories of interest from the latest statistics.

Some labour statistics releases are accompanied by articles providing in depth analysis of a statistical topic of interest. They explain the data, changes over time and underlying factors.

Labour statistics by theme

The tables below show our releases grouped according to the labour market theme(s) they provide data for.

Employment

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Labour Account Australia (/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release)	Accounts	Quarterly	Employment by sector and by Industry – Division level (quarterly) and Sub-division (annual).
Labour Force, Australia (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) ; Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release) ; Longitudinal Labour Force (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia)	Household survey	Monthly	Headline employment estimates. Labour force status over time including short-term transitions, for example flows into and out of employment and unemployment.
Labour Force Status of Families (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-status-families/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Labour force characteristics for whole families, for example 'jobless families'. Sourced from the monthly Labour Force Survey.
Employment and Earnings, Public Sector (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/employment-and-earnings-public-sector-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Annual	Public sector estimates by state/territory, and level of government.
Retirement and Retirement Intentions (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/retirement-and-retirement-intentions-australia/latest-release)	Household survey	Two-yearly	Retirement age, retirement expectations, sources of income in retirement.

Jobs

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Labour Account Australia (/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release)	Accounts	Quarterly	Jobs (total jobs, main and secondary filled jobs and unfilled jobs) by sector and by Industry – Division level (quarterly) and Sub-division (annual).
Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages (/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia/latest-release)	Admin data	Monthly	Weekly payroll jobs indexes including percentage change movement, based on Single Touch Payroll data.
Job Vacancies (/statistics/labour/jobs/job-vacancies-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Quarterly	Frequent measure of unmet labour demand – leading indicator of employment.
Jobs in Australia (/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/latest-release)	Admin data	Annual	Detailed geographic, demographic, industry and occupation data on filled jobs, based on Personal Income Tax data.
Job mobility (/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Job changes over the year, and previous job details. Sourced from the annual Participation Job Search and Mobility Labour Force supplementary survey.

Hours worked

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Labour Account Australia (/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release)	Accounts	Quarterly	Hours worked across entire quarter – Division level (quarterly) and Sub-division (annual).
Labour Force, Australia (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) ; Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release) ; Longitudinal Labour Force (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia)	Household survey	Monthly	Reference week hours actually and usually worked, total monthly hours worked. Month-to-month changes.
Underemployed workers (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Hours worked and not worked of the underemployed. Sourced from the monthly Labour Force Survey, supplemented with data from the annual Participation Job Search and Mobility Labour Force supplementary survey.
Working arrangements (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/working-arrangements/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Regularity/certainty of hours, including whether guaranteed minimum hours. Sourced from the annual Characteristics of Employment Labour Force supplementary survey.
Employee Earnings and Hours (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Two-yearly	Average weekly total hours paid for.

Underemployment, unemployment, and joblessness

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Labour Force, Australia (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) ; Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release) ; Longitudinal Labour Force (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia)	Household survey	Monthly	Headline unemployment estimates.
Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/barriers-and-incentives-labour-force-participation-australia/latest-release)	Household survey	Two-yearly	Factors that influence how people participate in the labour market and the hours they work.
Potential workers (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Measures potential labour supply. Sourced from the annual Participation Job Search and Mobility Labour Force supplementary survey.
Underemployed workers (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Comprehensive measure of extent of cyclical and structural underemployment. Sourced from the monthly Labour Force Survey, supplemented with data from the annual Participation Job Search and Mobility Labour Force supplementary survey.

Labour market dynamics

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Labour Force, Australia (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) ; Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release) ; Longitudinal Labour Force (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia)	Household survey	Monthly	Labour force status over time, including short-term transitions and flows into and out of employment and unemployment.
Job mobility (/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Job changes over the year, and previous job details. Sourced from the annual Participation Job Search and Mobility Labour Force supplementary survey.

Earnings

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Average Weekly Earnings (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/average-weekly-earnings-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Six-monthly	Headline level estimates of earnings. Used extensively in legislation.
Employee Earnings and Hours (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Two-yearly	Composition and distribution of weekly and hourly earnings, and pay-setting methods.
Employee earnings (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/employee-earnings/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Earnings for detailed demographic and employment characteristics. Sourced from the annual Characteristics of Employment Labour Force supplementary survey.
Employment and Earnings, Public Sector (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/employment-and-earnings-public-sector-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Annual	Public sector estimates by state/territory, and level of government.
Labour Account Australia (/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release)	Accounts	Quarterly	Labour payments, labour costs, labour income, compensation of employees, by sector and by Industry – Division level (quarterly) and Sub-division (annual).
Labour Costs (/statistics/economy/finance/labour-costs-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Irregular	Components of labour costs – Earnings, Superannuation, Payroll tax, workers compensation, Fringe Benefits Tax.
Personal Income in Australia (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/personal-income-australia/latest-release)	Admin data	Annual	Detailed geographic, demographic and occupation data on personal income, based on Personal Income Tax data.
Wage Price Index (/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Quarterly	Quarterly and annual wage indexes, unaffected by changes in compositional factors including employee characteristics and hours worked by industry, state/territory and sector.
Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages (/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia/latest-release)	Admin data	Monthly	Weekly total wage indexes including percentage change movement, based on Single Touch Payroll data.

Working arrangements, conditions and workplace relations

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Employee Earnings and Hours (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Two-yearly	Earnings and hours statistics by method of setting pay, and employment status and type.
Industrial Disputes (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/industrial-disputes-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Quarterly	Number of disputes, employees involved and working days lost.
Working arrangements (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/working-arrangements/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Sourced from the annual Characteristics of Employment Labour Force supplementary survey, supplemented by data from the monthly Labour Force Survey.
Work-related injuries (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/work-related-injuries/latest-release)	Household survey	Four-yearly	Including type of injury, job details and work-related injury financial assistance.
Trade union membership (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/trade-union-membership/latest-release)	Household survey	Two-yearly	Sourced from Characteristics of Employment Labour Force supplementary survey.
Pregnancy and employment transitions (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/FF16E659A7EBD2C7CA25720F007D9193?opendocument)	Household survey	Irregular	Labour market participation of women during pregnancy and after the birth.

Other releases

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Census of Population and Housing (/census)	Household survey	Five-yearly	Collects data from everyone on a range of topics, including income and work.
Education and work (/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia/latest-release)	Household survey	Annual	Education participation and attainment, along with engagement in education and work.
Personal Income of Migrants (/statistics/people/people-and-communities/personal-income-migrants-australia/latest-release)	Admin data	Annual	Estimates of personal income of migrants including by visa stream and type of income, sourced from the Personal Income Tax and Migrants Integrated Dataset (/about/data-services/data-integration/integrated-data/personal-income-tax-and-migrants-integrated-dataset-pitmid) .
Characteristics of recent migrants (/statistics/people/people-and-communities/characteristics-recent-migrants/latest-release)	Household survey	Three-yearly - Discontinued	Employment outcomes relating to visa type, birth country, education and language skills. Final release: November 2019.
Qualifications and work (/statistics/people/education/qualifications-and-work/latest-release)	Household survey	Irregular	Education qualifications and relevance to current jobs.
Voluntary work (/statistics/people/people-and-communities/general-social-survey-summary-results-australia/2020#voluntary-work-and-unpaid-work-support)	Household survey	Irregular	Provision of unpaid help beyond own family and household. Sourced from the General Social Survey.

Customised data

There are a number of ways to access more detailed data through self-service or working with the ABS, in addition to what is available on the ABS website including:

- TableBuilder – Create, save and download your own tables using many topics
- Microdata – Basic and detailed unit record information released through the DataLab to approved users for statistical analysis and research
- Integrated data – The ABS is an accredited [Integrating Authority \(/about/data-services/data-integration/data-integration-abs-integrating-authority-information\)](#), and works with government, research institutions and businesses on data integration projects that have a clear public benefit
- Customised data requests – Consultancy service providing aggregate data tailored to meet your needs

Some of these services may incur a fee, see [Data Services \(/about/data-services\)](#) for more information.

Information about labour statistics

- [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release\)](#) provides a comprehensive description of the concepts and definitions underpinning labour statistics and the data sources and methods used to

compile them. It should be read together with release specific methodology pages.

- [Guide to labour statistics \(/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics\)](/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics) is a summary resource on key labour market topics, designed to help people to understand labour statistics and identify the best source for their analysis. Additional topics will be added over time.